




1650
7 October 2003

MEMORANDUM

From: D. B. Lloyd, Capt 
CG AIRSTA Clearwater

Reply to: Comptroller
Attn of: LT B. C. Brown
1501

To: COMDT (G-WKW-1)
Thru: CG MLCLANT (k)

Subj: COAST GUARD DINING FACILITY OF THE YEAR NOMINATION FOR 2004

Ref: (a) Coast Guard Excellence in Food Service Awards, COMDTNOTE 1650 of 29 Jul 03

1. I proudly nominate the Coast Guard Dining Facility (CGDF) at Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater for the Coast Guard Dining Facility of the Year Award, Large Shore Category, for 2004. This CGDF clearly is the epitome of an outstanding large shore dining facility by which other galleys should be judged. They employ continuous improvement instituting new techniques and methods within the food service field that has achieved and maintained high customer satisfaction while setting new standards of excellence. It is a key support element for the Coast Guard's largest operational unit with our 18 aircraft and 600 assigned active duty, reserve, auxiliarist and civilian personnel. Aircraft and crews are dispatched on up to 20 sorties per day on Search & Rescue, Law Enforcement, Migrant Interdiction, Fisheries enforcement, Homeland Security and other Coast Guard missions. The station also operates up to five deployed HH-60J aircraft at two permanent forward operating bases in the Bahamas supporting Operation Bahamas, Turks & Caicos (OPBAT) as well as various other temporary forward deployment sites. The daily dynamic and high tempo routine places a tremendous demand on the Coast Guard Dining Facility. By focusing on superior customer service and culinary excellence, the CGDF established itself as a key component of the outstanding mission success, high crew morale and excellent flight safety for Air Station Clearwater.

2. During this calendar year, the Air Station Clearwater Dining Facility has proactively enhanced a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan. This plan was developed using the strict national standard set by FDA Food Code 2001, the National Restaurant Association and the Coast Guard Sanitation Manual specifically to enhance the sanitation program and food service preparation standards. The HACCP plan has seven priorities:

- A. Identify the hazards associated with the food service operation beginning with clients, establishments, suppliers, policies and procedures
- B. Identify critical control points such as monitoring cooking temperatures and cooking instructions

- C. Determine standards and criteria associated with research data, facts about cooking with foods, risks associated with food, federal and local regulations, suppliers, recommendations, own experience and equipment in relation to personnel work force
 - D. Use the self-generated HACCP form to monitor critical control points
 - E. Take corrective action, reject deliveries when needed, label and date food items and properly rotate food items
 - F. Improve and maintain high standards in record keeping (temperature logs, cooking instructions, results, customer feedback)
 - G. Verify and validate trends, provide and obtain feedback to set and improve standards in concert with and for suppliers, medical department; update and revise as necessary
3. These steps work to prevent food-borne illnesses before they spread within the food service preparation process. Incorporating flowcharts and modules that identify potential hazards of foods based on type, time in preparation, handling/cooking temperatures and shelf-life, the HACCP plan ensures that all food is properly handled from the moment it is off loaded into the CGDF storage spaces until it is served to the patrons. The HACCP program is incorporated into the daily preparation of flight meals. In addition, the Air Station employs a Glo-Germ training program to enhance cleanliness and sanitation of all food service personnel. The HACCP program an integral part of the overall food service operation at Clearwater. The program enjoys process ownership at all levels from management to the duty Food Service Specialist that fosters outstanding team cohesion and success. For example -- our Food Service Specialists utilize color-coded cutting boards and knives for food preparation based on the type of food being prepared. This careful separation of food and matching it to the proper color-coded board enforces strict HACCP guidelines and eliminates the possibility of cross-contamination between food products.
4. The CGDF fully utilizes the Coast Guard Data Network to forecast needs, plan menus and manage all aspects of the facility. Food Service Specialists fully employ the information systems provided by the Coast Guard to organize recipes, maintain measurements to monitor HACCP compliance and to generate all reports, menus and documentation. Clerical errors are dramatically reduced and nearly eliminated as a result. The Duty Food Service Specialists are able to instantly access recipes, food preparation techniques, and additional information provided by the HACCP modules. The CGDF has a dedicated web site for the crew to view menus, read weekly newsletters about healthy cooking techniques, browse food news and provide web-based meal critiques. Limited AFC30 resources in support of galley operations and maintenance were greatly improved with the implementation of the Large Unit Financial System NT within the dining facility management. The Comptroller and Food Services Officer now have micro level detail of costs, maintenance history and return on investment information. The combined use of LUFS-NT with Entrust Digital Signature technology has eliminated the paper procurement process and replaced it with a streamlined electronic "paperless" system.

5. To promote educational opportunities and emphasize professional development, the Food Service Officer established a comprehensive research library of professional readings covering topics ranging from culinary techniques to comprehensive food service restaurant management. A recent initiative is the creation of a "culinary student" program within the Air Station. This program, once fully implemented will allow military personnel, other than Food Service Specialists the ability to "work" alongside experienced Food Service Specialists. This experience of learning real life cooking skills will enable the member to develop solid culinary skills for their personal enjoyment. This program will allow our Food Service Staff the ability to "show off" their culinary skills, as well as build camaraderie between the Food Service Specialists and the other Coast Guard men and women they support.

6. Our CGDF staff maintains an excellent rapport with its main customers, the crew of Air Station Clearwater. Outstanding customer service is maintained by obtaining input from the crew on how service can be improved, how the galley can better support them and how their culinary experience can be enhanced. Critique sheets and web-based critiques are sources of valuable criticism from the crew in addition to that sought and obtained during each meal. Immediate action is taken so meals, conditions and service can be adjusted to better serve customers. This program allows our CGDF patrons the ability to evaluate overall food service, request certain menu items and actively communicate with the Food Service Specialists. As a result of this feedback, the CGDF procured additional beverage dispensers, food carousel, juice machine and a self-service cappuccino and espresso machines. Based on feedback from its patrons, the CGDF increased the speed line menu items to include three types of deli sandwiches, provided five different menu box lunches, and prepared exquisite meals such as london broil and Alaskan King crab legs on a more recurring basis.

7. The CGDF consistently demonstrates its superior culinary skills as well as the ability to plan, organize and host large scale catering events that have drawn high level dignitary attendance. Recent examples include luncheons for the local chapters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Tampa area Navy League councils, Tampa area members of the newly formed Department of Homeland Security as well as several holiday and special event programs attended by Federal, State and local dignitaries including the Commandant, Vice-Commandant, District Seven Commander, other flag officers, and Senior Executive Service dignitaries. These special events gave our CGDF staff the opportunity to showcase their culinary skills in exquisite meal preparation, professional service and attention to detail including colored ice carvings and finely detailed, hand-crafted garnishings.

8. The CGDF employs the SERVESAFE program as a measure of effectiveness in the training standards for our Food Service staff. The SERVESAFE training program provides a cooperative alliance in the State of Florida that requires all food service management and workers to use SERVESAFE essentials. The basics of the program are the underlying procedures in a HACCP program developed by NASA in the 1960's for the safety of food and other products in the space program. Each new Food Service Specialist becomes an active participant in the SERVESAFE program with the Food Service Officer ensuring the elements and recurrent training are accomplished. Training in the SERVESAFE program ensures each Food Service Specialist has

completed a regimen of defining and understanding food borne illness, proper personal hygiene, purchasing, receiving and storing food products, preparing, cooking and serving meals, and cleanliness and sanitation of galley spaces. This strict curriculum, which is above CG standards, ensures our Food Service staff is well prepared for further assignments within the Coast Guard, as well as achieving coveted civilian principles. Recently the FS staff became qualified as Certified Food Service Managers (CFSM). This certification is a milestone in the food service industry, as it signifies the high level of knowledge to manage and operate a food service establishment.

9. In February 2003, dining service was temporarily relocated to the Air Station's Red Tail Lounge to accommodate a desperately needed Dining Facility Air Conditioning & Refrigeration modernization project. During the extreme heat of the Florida summer, the heat in the galley spaces would routinely reach 100 degrees, while the serving lines and patron seating areas would be 85 degrees. This extreme heat caused fatigue, heat stress and was an uncomfortable working and dining environment. The Galley Team laboriously prepared the Red Tail Lounge as the temporary dining facility. The procurement of new food service equipment and the meticulous attention to cleanliness, innovative use of space, and continued focus on customer service maintained a high level of customer satisfaction despite abnormal work conditions. Through innovative scheduling the dining facility staff employed approximately 80 man-hours cleaning and preparing the new facility while concurrently operating the old galley spaces prior to the shift in services. During the 12-weeks the CGDF staff operated in the Red Tail Lounge they continued to provide superior quality and diverse meal selections despite less than adequate preparation and cooking spaces. After the AC&R modernization was completed, the galley staff laboriously cleaned, painted, and improved the Dining Hall. They succeeded in greatly improving the CGDF dining atmosphere with the addition of subdued lighting, new wall coverings, a rebuilt CPO Mess and the addition of aviation and Coast Guard period artwork. The upheaval was handled expertly. They moved between locations and prepared each facility for dining operations employing excellent planning, innovation and execution that ensured no impact to our very high paced operations.

10. The CGDF at Air Station Clearwater has been evaluated in nine different categories in accordance with reference (a). The command staff compiled the data, which is included as enclosure (1). The following are specific examples of excellence in each category:

A. MENU PLANNING, NUTRITIONAL ADEQUACY AND PREPARATION. Menus are prepared using a four-week cycle plan with the food items selected based on the USDA Food Guide Pyramid, nutritional value, health concerns and crew appeal. The entrée for each meal is prepared using low fat cooking techniques and reduced calorie foods including skim milk, salad dressings, fruits and salads are always available. The salad bar offers 28 items and 9 salad dressings including tossed greens and two specialty salads. These menus are consistently reviewed by the Food Service Officer (FSO), Comptroller and the Executive Officer prior to being posted on the Galley Intranet Web page.

B. FOOD PRESENTATION AND SERVING TECHNIQUES. The implemented HACCP plan ensures that the CGDF exceeds all standards for food preparation, presentation and serving. The photos in Enclosure (2) reflect this effort and attention to detail that the dining facility exhibits daily. On several occasions, the duty cooks serve the meal in a restaurant-style format in which they prepare individual plates and utilize proper garnishing techniques to ensure that a professional appearance is attained without wasting food items. Additionally, the CGDF routinely prepares freshly baked cakes and pastries for retirements and special Command functions, which were attractively decorated with the current theme.

C. FOOD ACCEPTABILITY. Using Galley Feedback sheets, the FSO consistently monitors food acceptability. The feedback sheets are readily available which allows the crew to critique the CGDF on food taste, appearance and overall appeal. The CGDF also accepts this critical feedback for the thousands of flight meals served. The overall response continues to be most favorable with high ratings in all categories. In addition to the feedback sheets, the CGDF utilizes its outstanding relationship with the crew to actively seek input through normal conversation. The Comptroller/Supply Department Head, Food Service Officer, Galley Supervisor and the cashier routinely ask the crew how certain meals tasted or what they would like to see on the menu in the future. This active feedback solicitation greatly enhances the "appeal" of the CGDF to its patrons.

D. FOOD CONSERVATION, SANITATION AND SAFETY. Food conservation and sanitation are actively monitored through the HACCP plan. In an effort to reduce plate waste, reasonable amounts of food are served and the crew is reminded that additional servings are available should they be needed. To ensure that proper safety and sanitation is practiced after a meal, leftovers are properly covered and dated. The CGDF invested in Dissolve-A-Way brand labeling system to ensure accurate labeling of all leftovers, as well as an FDA approved, environmentally safe dissolving label system. Each week, Air Station Health Services Technicians inspect the condition of all galley equipment and personnel with regard to sanitation and personal hygiene. A weekly report is provided to the Commanding Officer and FSO thereby noting any discrepancies. This CGDF routinely receives top scores averaging 99%. Additionally, the FSO inspects the galley daily to ensure that proper sanitation, hygiene and HACCP practices are being strictly maintained and enforced.

E. MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING. The CGDF excels in cross-training all Food Service Specialists. Air Station Clearwater is a training ground for the Food Service Rating - routinely getting newly assigned FS personnel straight from the FS "A" school. The CGDF training program ensures each FS is fully qualified for an independent duty, afloat assignment. Our training program allows junior petty officers to be exposed to and learn Dining Facility Management and Administration skills. Additionally, training videos developed by the National Restaurant Association are utilized in weekly training plans. We recently adopted the Food Service Professional Guide, a series of 15 books to expand our training curriculum to include all aspects of Restaurant Management

including Food Service Operations, Food Service Costs, Restaurant Profits, Waiter & Waitress Training, Successful Catering, Food Service Menus, Restaurant Design and much more. All with the goal of improving our CGDF, and building well rounded Food Service Specialists who are fully prepared to assume additional duties within the Coast Guard, as well as in the civilian sector of food service and restaurant management. The civilian contractor mess attendant staff is jointly trained using the same standards as the CG. In the past year 3 Food Service Specialists have attended Coast Guard culinary training, and one has attended the Culinary Institute of America. During the past year we have advanced two FS3's and currently have two FS3's on the FS2 Supplemental Advancement List.

F. MANNING AND SUPERVISION. All Food Service Specialists have a thorough knowledge of their duties and perform them with great pride. Recent examples include the efforts of one of our FS's in personalizing festive holiday meals, and preparing soups and sauces from scratch. The flexibility of the CGDF is exceptional, as it has altered meal schedules to accommodate flight operations or training missions. The massive responsibility of supporting a 600-person unit with nearly 18 assigned aircraft in the Seventh District and Caribbean theater is a monumental challenge – which our CGDF staff delivers with unequalled success. The Food Services Officer faced numerous personnel challenges this year. At one point, due to transfers and medical conditions the galley staff was down to less than 50% of its regular staffing complement. This required extra shifts, longer working hours and extraordinary dedication and commitment to excellence to maintain a superior level of service to its patrons. In addition, Food Service personnel were put to the challenge to provide additional meals to support Homeland Security tasking, as well as contributing personnel to the Air Station security detail conducting security patrols 24 hours a day in heightened threat conditions. The CGDF routinely responds to requests for TAD FS support, and provides when feasible. One of our FS's recently volunteered and was accepted for a 6-month deployment to Iraq.

G. RECEIVING AND STORAGE. The Jack of the Dust (JOD) is responsible for ordering, receiving and storage of provisions. Food stores are received several times a week to ensure freshness and wholesomeness. The JOD personally checks the receipted items against the invoices and secures them in a locked space until issued. Additionally, these inventoried items are entered into a computer spreadsheet to ensure that a proper inventory is maintained at all times.

H. PAPERWORK ADMINISTRATION. The use of computer automation shows how innovation can enhance overall performance, administration and monitoring of the dining facility. An Excel spreadsheet is used for all reports, ledgers and inventories that pertain to the CGDF. The spreadsheets are linked so that the different reports are generated without duplication. Additionally, the use of this spreadsheet format has reduced clerical errors significantly. As a result, the CGDF has been well within accuracy thresholds on monthly reports.

I. COMMAND ATTENTION AND RELATIONS. I am committed to providing the critical funding and administrative support necessary to ensure that the CGDF has the necessary materials and equipment needed to properly serve the crew. Within this past year, nearly \$78K of unit AFC30 funds was used to procure new equipment, hardware and utensils. The CGDF also has improved the decor of the dining area with the addition of new textured walls, window treatments, carpeting and a new salad bar to enhance health and wellness. Equally, I am committed to recognizing the hard work, dedication and commitment to excellence demonstrated by this outstanding CGDF staff. I routinely recognize the efforts of the CGDF Staff at all-hands meetings and I have implemented a "FS of the Quarter" award program. I have also had the pleasure of presenting personal awards to departing FS personnel so that all patrons can applaud the efforts of the fine men and women of this exceptional CGDF. During the past year I have presented CGDF staff members a CG Meritorious Team Commendation, one CG Commendation Medal, one CG Achievement Medal, two CG Letter of Commendation and four Letters of Appreciation recognizing superior individual performance.

J. I wholeheartedly believe the CGDF at Air Station Clearwater deserves recognition as the Coast Guard Dining Facility of the Year. It has consistently displayed innovation, adaptability, teamwork and unwavering work ethics to directly increase the quality of life for all Coast Guard members. The CGDF is setting a new standard for all dining facilities to follow, and truly epitomizes the core values of the United States Coast Guard.

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Encl: (1) Evaluation/Training/Checklist for CGDF
(2) Photos of AIRSTA Clearwater CGDF
(3) Dining Facility/FS Awards
(4) Copy of Unit Cycle Menus
(5) Copy of Unit Mission
(6) Copy of CGDF Critique Sheets